

REMARKS

Currently pending in the above-identified application are claims 1-4, 6-24, 26, 28 and 31-36. Claims 1, 19, 20, 26 and 28 are independent claims. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6, 19, 26 and 28 have been amended and claims 5, 25, 27, 29-30 and 37 have been canceled. No new claims have been added. In light of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

I. Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 20-22 have been indicated allowable, and claims 3-7, 19, 26 and 28 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter and pursuant to the indication of allowable subject has revised the current claim set to incorporate the allowable subject matter into all of the outstanding and pending claims herein. Accordingly, the claim amendments obviate the claim objections to claims 3-7, 19, 26 and 28.

II. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 11-18, 23-25, 27 and 29-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,966,639 to Goldberg et al. (hereinafter “Goldberg”), in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,479,240 to McKinley, Jr. (hereinafter “McKinley, Jr.”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,918,717 to Bissonnette et al. (hereinafter “Bissonnette”); and rejects claims 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goldberg in view of McKinley in further view of Bissonnette, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,993,073 to Sparkes (hereinafter “Sparkes”). The rejections with regards to claims 5, 25, 27, 29-30 and 37 are rendered moot by their cancellation.

Furthermore, and insofar as the subject matter of the objected claims, specifically, claims 3-7, 19, 26 and 28 have been amended, and incorporated herein into the remaining dependent claims, Applicant respectfully asserts that either expressly or implicitly said subject matter may now be found within all the currently pending claims and accordingly has acted to obviate all the rejections under those remaining pending claims specifically, either under the combination of Goldberg in view of McKinley and further in view of Bissonnette or Goldberg in view of McKinley and further in view of Bissonnette and Sparkes.

III. Conclusion

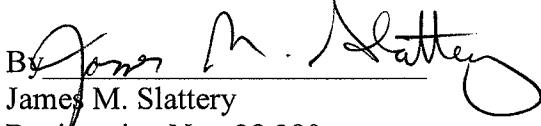
In view of the above amendment, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact James M. Slattery Reg. No. 28,380 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.147; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: July 7, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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